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TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

* United Nations is leading way towards new international era of democratization, Secretary-General tells Foreign Policy Association.

* Secretary-General discusses situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina, including Rapid Reaction Force, with United Kingdom Defence Secretary.

* Bosnian Government turns three UNHCR convoys back from Sarajevo for security reasons; food stocks dwindle in eastern enclaves.

* Special Commission Chairman says Iraq has no significant capability in areas of chemical weapons and long-range missiles; expresses concern regarding biological area.

* International health bodies warn diphtheria epidemic in former Soviet Union could become global health emergency.

* UNAMIR cost estimate reduced by $21 million for period 10 June to 31 December following Security Council decision to scale Mission down.

* Economic and Social Council to hold 1995 substantive session in Geneva from 26 June to 28 July.

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The United Nations is leading the way towards a new international era -- the age of democratization -- according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a statement to the Foreign Policy Association last night, he stressed that the Organization needed the support of its Member States and their peoples in that effort. Public, political, moral, material, military and financial support were crucial in times of great change and great suffering.

Supporting the United Nations did not mean subsidizing a separate, independent entity, the Secretary-General went on to say. It meant participating

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in the only world Organization composed of all humanity, and in the service of all humanity. Never before had the world had such a chance to establish a universal civil society which administered law, he concluded.

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The Secretary-General met today at Headquarters with the Secretary of State for Defence of the United Kingdom, Malcom Rifkind, according to a United Nations spokesman. He expressed his appreciation for the United Kingdom's support for peace-keeping operations, and they discussed the country's work on conflict resolution, particularly in Africa.

The Secretary-General and the Defence Secretary discussed the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina at length, including the role of the Rapid Reaction Force. Mr. Rifkind described that Force as a useful enhancement of the United Nations Force Commander's assets in the field. Mr. Boutros-Ghali stressed the importance of retaining the option of using air power, as authorized by the Security Council. They also discussed cooperation between the United Nations and the European Union, including the roles of the Co-Chairmen of the International Conference on the Former Yugoslavia.

The situation in Angola was also discussed, particularly the demining operation there. The Secretary-General asked Mr. Rifkind for British assistance in that regard, and called his attention to the conference on demining activities to be held in Geneva on 7 July.

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Three United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convoys were today turned back from Sarajevo by the Bosnian Government, according to a spokesman for the Organization. The three convoys -- totaling 37 vehicles carrying 450 metric tons of humanitarian supplies -- were stopped before Mount Igman for security reasons. They were expected to try to enter the city tomorrow from the north. However, there has been substantial military activity in that area recently, and the UNHCR was not optimistic about the prospects for success tomorrow.

The spokesman noted that the UNHCR, the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) and the Bosnian Government had teamed up to carry an average of 30 tons of flour into Sarajevo each day. Those deliveries kept the city's bakery operating at less than 50 per cent of capacity. Meanwhile, the eastern enclaves had an average of three to four days worth of food in stock, leaving the most vulnerable sections of the population "very close to the edge."

One convoy had been prevented by the Bosnian Serbs from entering Gorazde since Saturday, the spokesman continued. Another convoy had been unable to reach

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Bihac pending clearance from rebel Muslim leader Fikret Abdic. However, a nine-vehicle convoy reached Srebrenica today after Bosnian Serb soldiers extorted fuel as the price of entry. UNPROFOR was also experiencing difficulties in attempting to resupply peace-keepers.

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The United Nations Special Commission is confident that Iraq does not have any significant prohibited capability in the areas of chemical weapons and long-range missiles, according to its Executive Chairman, Rolf Ekeus. He told correspondents at Headquarters today that the Commission's monitoring and verification system would detect any Iraqi attempt to acquire such a capability. He made those comments after reporting to the Security Council on Iraqi compliance with resolution 687 (1991).

However, Mr. Ekeus expressed concern regarding Iraq's capability in the biological area. The Special Commission had discovered that the country had imported the necessary components for a biological weapons programme before the Gulf War, but did not know if such a programme existed. Information received from a variety of sources since April had only added to its concern. If Iraq were to openly declare what it had done with the imported components, that information could easily be verified using the Commission's database. The biological issue could be quickly resolved, he said, "but it is completely, obviously in the hands of the Iraqis."

Mr. Ekeus described his report to the Security Council as "very positive" overall, citing Iraq's cooperation with ongoing monitoring activities. Several Council members had expressed great satisfaction at the progress achieved, he noted, although all had been critical of Iraq's compliance in the biological area.

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An epidemic of diphtheria in the newly-independent States of the former Soviet Union is spinning out of control and could become a global public health emergency. That warning came yesterday from the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO), as they launched a joint appeal for $33 million for diphtheria control.

For decades, diphtheria was considered a controlled disease in Europe. However, the situation changed rapidly in the early 1990s with outbreaks in all of the newly-independent States. Almost 48,000 cases and 1,700 deaths were reported in the region in 1994. WHO predicts 150,000 to 200,000 new cases there this year.

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The estimated cost of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Rwanda (UNAMIR) for the period 10 June to 31 December has been reduced by $21 million to $110 million, the Fifth Committee (Administrative and Budgetary) has heard. The reduction followed the Security Council's decision on 9 June to scale down the Mission. Resolution 997 (1995) authorized a reduction from 5,500 to 2,300 troops within three months, and to 1,800 troops within four months.

United Nations Controller Yukio Takasu told the Fifth Committee that the cost estimate had been based on several factors, such as the reduction in strength, a 10 per cent cut in civilian personnel and operating costs, and an increase in the transport requirements to withdraw troops and equipment.

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The Economic and Social Council will hold its 1995 substantive session in Geneva from 26 June to 28 July. Discussions will focus on the coordinated implementation of international agreements on population and development matters and social and other economic issues adopted at recent world conferences. The Council will tackle the challenge of implementing those agreements as it strives to bring greater coherence to the development work of the United Nations.

The 54-member Council will also consider such issues as conservation of forests for sustainable development, United Nations electoral assistance, and prevention of terrorism and organized crime. In addition, it will deal with the human rights situations in various countries, including Iraq and Haiti.

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